

AROUND THE CORPS IN BRIEF

Kaneohe Bay warriors go hot in Australia

**SHOALWATER BAY TRAINING AREA, QUEENSLAND, Australia** — After two full weeks in the Australian bush, Marines from 2nd Bn., 3rd Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade, finally received the chance to load their weapons with live rounds for the unit’s planned combined arms, live-fire exercise here Sept. 23.

The battalion, supported by three companies of mechanized armor from reserve units across the United States and artillery support from Charlie Battery, 1st Bn., 12th Marine Regiment, from MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, set out across the firing ranges of Queensland’s Shoalwater Bay training area to add an even deeper sense of realism to the force-on-force exercise that occurred during the last two weeks of Exercise Crocodile 2003, which lasted Sept. 6 - 26.

Echo, Golf and Fox companies moved about the training area via Amphibious Assault Vehicles, CH-46 Sea Knight helicopters and Light Armored Vehicles to assault specified targets, which acted as enemy forces spread across the training area. Marines fired weapons ranging from M-16s to MK-19 automatic grenade launchers during the exercise.

While Marines often get the chance to use their weapons on ranges in Hawaii, the chance to use them in Australia gave them greater knowledge of their capabilities in the different environment.

“The terrain here is a lot different than something we’d encounter at a training area like PTA [Pohakuloa Training Area] or Schofield [Barracks],” said Capt. Brian Russell, commanding officer of Charlie, 1/12.

The exercise kicked off in the early morning and kept the Marines moving for most of the day, traveling from one objective to another while destroying enemy positions along the way.

Marine receives Bronze Star in ceremony

**CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.** — Major Stephen Armes, Advanced Infantry Training Company commanding officer, was awarded the Bronze Star Oct. 10 for his actions while serving as 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment operations officer during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Armes was awarded the Bronze Star, with a Combat “V” device for valor, for his efforts in planning and executing numerous attacks as his unit moved from Kuwait into Baghdad.

The battalion was the first Marine unit to cross the line of departure on March 20, and moved up into the Rumaylah oil fields, where the situation required Armes to plan to attack over nine hours ahead of schedule with no supporting fires. The battalion destroyed an Iraqi brigade and secured the oil fields.

Armes continued to coordinate attacks on Iraqi forces while traveling with the Alpha Command Group, which was the company in the lead as the battalion moved north. On April 10, Armes entered Baghdad in an amphibious assault vehicle. Their objective was the Al Azimiyah Presidential Palace.

While en route, the column Armes was traveling in fell under ambush.

“There was just a barrage of gunfire,” said Armes. “Guys were coming from everywhere. Down an alleyway came some guys with (rocket-propelled grenades). They had to be taken out, or they would take us out.”

Armes responded by grabbing a nearby M-16A2 service rifle and firing at the oncoming attackers.

Throughout the ceremony, Armes continually credited his troops for the accomplishments in his citation.

Miramar conducts mass casualty training drill

**MCAS MIRAMAR, Calif.** — An annual drill was conducted aboard the Air Station Oct. 1 to prepare personnel in the event of a mass casualty emergency here.

With more than a dozen military and civilian emergency agencies involved, the drill helped personnel on both sides to familiarize themselves with each other in case they need to assist each other in the event of an accident.

“This is an annual requirement and is part of our disaster preparedness program,” said Maj. Kevin T. Kelley, Headquarters and Headquarters plans officer. “It gave us the chance to work with San Diego and their emergency response personnel.”

According to Kelley, in the event of an actual emergency, accident victims would be transported to one of several

### A final farewell to fallen warriors ...



**MCB CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.** — Thirty-nine inverted rifles, helmets and boots symbolize the Marines and sailors of the 1st Marine Division, who gave the ultimate sacrifice in Operation Iraqi Freedom, during a memorial ceremony Oct. 10, held here. The service gave Marines, friends and families a chance to gather and bid a final farewell to the 39 fallen warriors. An identical service was held at the Marine Air/Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms, Calif., on Oct. 7, because several Division units are based there. The Division served as the ground combat element of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force during Operation Iraqi Freedom. All Division units have returned to the United States.

hospitals in the San Diego county area.

The drill included 60 role players playing the part of victims. With mock injuries ranging from a woman in labor to a hysterical civilian, military and civilian doctors were there to assist all in need.

With involvement from military and civilian organizations, the Provost Marshal’s Office here would play a vital role in an emergency.

“We are the first responders during an emergency or crisis,” said Lance Cpl. Ildefonso Gonzalez, patrolman, PMO, H&HS. “We are traffic control, security and we are responsible for securing or unsecuring the flight line to allow medical vehicles to enter and assist.”

Football Town USA welcomes home troops

**MCAS NEW RIVER, N.C.** — As New River Marines returned home from war they were greeted with something more than the usual tears of joy, homecomings and parades. The 2003 Coca-Cola Football Town USA Tour made a recent stop aboard the Station in the Exchange parking lot Oct. 2.

The Coca-Cola Company wished to express their appreciation to the troops for a job well done.

“This event gives our Marines a chance to get out of the office for a little while, test their football knowledge and their skills. It’s a good time,” said Richard Cole, Semper Fit Director.

“Football Town” is set up as a series of football events designed to test the individual’s skills and knowledge while incorporating fun and tradition.

In Football Town, the “Fourth Quarter Drive” allowed Marines to race against the clock through a short obstacle course while completing a lengthy pass at the end to a pop-up receiver.

The “Two-Minute Drill” was set up in Jeopardy format, challenging competitors on their football knowledge.

The Marines also became the athletes for a day having their photos taken and posted on the Web as ESPN The Magazine cover photos.

Additionally, the crew gave out temporary tattoos and let the Marines compete at creating their own “game sign” for their favorite teams.

“We usually only set up at college and professional football games for tailgaters,” said Jeffery Henderson, Football Town USA field coordinator. “We decided to include some military bases in our tour to say thank you to the troops for the job they did in Iraq.”

2nd MAW secures air assets in Djibouti

**CAMP LEMONIER, Djibouti** — Marines from Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort recently replaced the Air Force Security Forces Squadron here providing security for Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa’s air assets.

The members of Marine Wing Support Squadron 273, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing, aboard Camp Lemonier protect resources and personnel to include the helicopters, cargo aircraft and equipment on the flight line, as well as any transient aircraft that come through the Horn of Africa, according to Gunnery Sgt. Jeffrey Beegle, staff non-commissioned officer in charge.

Upon arriving here Sept. 21, they post-shadowed the Air Force for three

days before taking over. The squadron relieved the 87th ESFS, who recently received orders to re-deploy in support of the War on Terrorism.

“Once getting the word from our command, we had less than 10 days to get our equipment and Marines to Djibouti and ready to stand guard. When the word of a departure had passed throughout the squadron, we had plenty of volunteers eager to deploy,” explained Staff Sgt. Julio Gonzalez, platoon sergeant.

The MWSS mission involves accomplishing a variety of tasks related to air-field security.

Arriving at Camp Lemonier, the support squadron took the reigns from the Air Force ESFS, and the Marines of Task Force Rawhide, 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (Antiterrorism), were quick to take them under their wing.

“The leaders of 3/6 (3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment) are the greatest group of leaders I’ve ever encountered. They’re constantly helping us out and I can’t give enough thanks to them,” Beegle said.

Engineers construct pits for training

**MCAS IWAKUNI, Japan** — Fresh from their recent deployment to Alaska, combat engineers from Marine Wing Support Squadron 171 wasted no time getting back into their building ways here.

The project this time was to construct two martial arts pits to facilitate the growing numbers of Marine Corps martial arts classes being held here.

“We built one pit at Penny Lake and another one adjacent to the MAC Dome,” said Staff Sgt. Corey Crawford, MWSS-171 construction foreman. “From the start, the project was planned to take only a few days to complete because there were a few steps involved.”

The steps Crawford was referring to, involved drafting and surveying a perfect square before any construction could be started. Once the perfect square was roped off the Marines placed a special textile on the ground covering the entire square. According to Crawford, the textile acts as a great training surface for Marines because it keeps weeds from popping up and the area dry while the ground underneath still receives moisture. Once the textile is stretched out four-by-fours are laid down to replace the rope and then reinforced with steel stakes.

“The four-by-fours act as the border for the pits, and after we laid those down and the textile was firmly in place we dumped what looked like grated rubber into the pit,” said Pfc. Kevin Booth, MWSS-171 combat engineer. “The rubber is to soften the blow when you get knocked on your butt during training.”

Booth said the final step in the construction of the pit was to place two rows of sandbags around the four-by-fours for safety reasons.

New 7-ton truck better than older model

**MCAS IWAKUNI, Japan** — Marine Wing Support Squadron 171 motor transportation Marines received a new piece of gear in their inventory recently. The Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement, affectionately known as

the “seven-ton truck”, is replacing its aging predecessor the five-ton.

MWSS-171 received 19 of these heavy-duty trucks that stand more than 11 feet high.

This state-of-the-art people mover comes equipped with new gadgetry that appeals to both mechanics and drivers alike, according to Lance Cpl. Calvin Hatfield, MWSS-171, motor transportation mechanic.

As a mechanic, life with the MTRV will get a little easier thanks to computerized diagnostics that comes stocked on the truck.

“With the five-ton, you were always playing a guessing game. You had to troubleshoot to find the problems. The seven-ton is going to tell you exactly what’s wrong with it,” he said.

The Oshkosh Truck Corporation built the vehicle. Using a C12 Caterpillar diesel engine, the seven-ton boasts 425 horsepower under the hood.

Inside the cab, Cole said the truck has some comforts not found in many military vehicles. A cushioned seat sits behind a push-button dash that allows drivers to shift without using a clutch. Another in-cab luxury is the innovative central tire inflation system (CTIS). Tire pressure can be adjusted at any

time from inside the cab, he said.

The seven-ton comes in two models: a short-bed model called the MK-23 and an extended bed version dubbed the MK-28, which comes equipped with a heavy-duty winch.

CH-46 squadrons lose Marines to Osprey MOS

**MCAS MIRAMAR, Calif.** — Marine medium helicopter squadrons here are losing valuable CH-46 technicians and specialists, including crew chiefs, mechanics, airframe mechanics and communications and navigations technicians, to Marine Medium Tiltrotor Training Squadron 204, the MV-22 Osprey training program at Marine Corps Air Station New River, N.C.

Staff Sgt. Nicholas R. Deitz, career retention specialist, is the Marine who processes the re-enlistment and lateral move packages for the MV-22 Osprey hopefuls for HMM-165.

“They’ll be missed,” Deitz said of the Marines who have already been sent to the new aviation program. “We’ve been losing Marines to B-billets such as Drill Instructor duty, or other specialties like advanced avionics and ordnance schools.”

Most Marines who have already left the “Frog” squadrons for MV-22 schools did not want to go to the new military occupational specialty, but did not have much of a choice, according to Deitz.

“They wanted to stay Marine,” Deitz explained. “For some of them, their only options were to move to another non-flying MOS or get out. None of them wanted to do that, so the Osprey program became a good thing.”


The aviation Marines won’t leave the CH-46 squadrons empty-handed; in some cases, a re-enlistment for an Osprey package could earn an aviator thousands of dollars. Although they may be eligible for a service re-enlistment bonus as CH-46 Marines, the bonuses for a “Frog” Marine crossing over to the new tiltrotor MOS are substantially higher to lure new Marines to the fledgling school.

Contributing factors such as better pay, family needs or career concerns can also dictate a CH-46 Marine’s decision to join the new job field, according to Deitz.

“I’m sure it will be a little bit of a break,” Deitz said of the operation tempo for the Marines who are going to the tiltrotor school. Several of the Marine Corps’ HMM squadrons have been constantly deployed during Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, or as part of a Marine Expeditionary Unit or other training missions.

Compiled by the MCRD  
Parris Island Public Affairs Office

### Anyone seen my Monster Garage?



**Gunnery Sgt. Mark Oliva**  
**MCB CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.** — Jesse James of Discovery Channel’s ‘Monster Garage’ straps on a crewman’s helmet as he settles into the commander’s seat on an amphibious assault vehicle at Camp Pendleton’s White Beach Sept. 30. James tried to turn a DeLorean into a hovercraft for an upcoming ‘Monster Garage’ episode, but the experiment failed. He turned to Pendleton’s Assault Amphibian School Battalion for a little help turning the project back into scrap metal.